

No.
650

Commando

WAR STORIES IN PICTURES

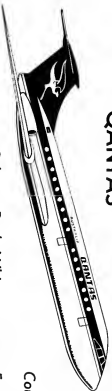
6p

AUS 18c N1



KNOW YOUR AIRLINES

QANTAS



Colours: Red, White.

Country of Origin:

Australia.

Formed: 1920.

Network: World-wide.

S.A.A. (South African Airways)

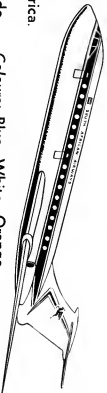


Country of Origin:

South Africa.

Formed: 1934.

Network: World-wide.



Colours: Blue, White, Orange.

THE TIN GRASSHOPPER

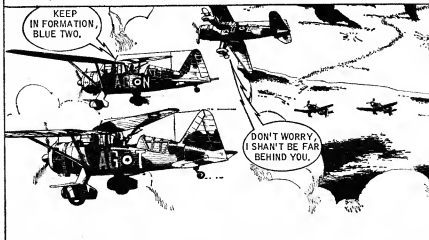
IT WAS MAY 1940, AND HIGH ABOVE THE CROWDED BEACHES OF DUNKIRK A RECONNAISSANCE PATROL OF LYSANDERS CAME UNDER SUDDEN ATTACK BY ENEMY FIGHTERS.



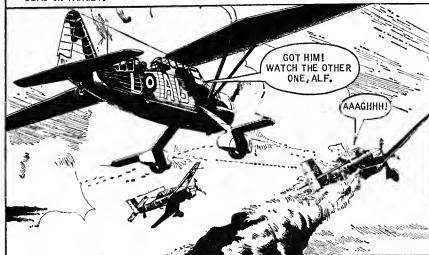
JERRIES -
MAKE FOR THE
CLOUDS!

SERGEANT TOM DUNTON HEARD HIS LEADER'S ORDER AND MOVED TO OBEY. HE WAS ALWAYS READY FOR A SCRAP - BUT NOT WHEN HE WAS IN A LYSANDER AND THE OTHER PLANES WERE Me109s!

THE THREE LYSANDERS WENT FULL SPEED FOR THE SAFETY OF THE CLOUDS - BUT THEN TOM SAW TWO JUNKERS 87s ABOUT TO ATTACK THE CROWDED BEACHES. HE ALERTED HIS GUNNER, ALF JACOBS, AND MOVED INTO THE ATTACK.



TOM WENT DIVING TOWARDS THE NEAREST JUNKERS 87, FIRING AS HE WENT. HE WAS DEAD ON TARGET.



AS THE SECOND JUNKER FLASHED ACROSS HIS SIGHTS, ALF FIRED A QUICK, TELLING BURST.



THE FIGHTERS CLOSED IN ANGRILY AS TOM STREAKED DESPERATELY FOR THE CLOUDS.



AS THE CLOUD SURROUNDED THEM, ALF MANAGED TO BEAT OUT THE FLAMES, DESPITE HIS WOUNDED SHOULDER. BUT HE COULD NOT PREVENT THEM FROM CAUSING DAMAGE.



WITH ONE WHEEL STRUT GONE, THE BATTERED LIZZIE LIMPED HOME, WHERE HER APPEARANCE CAUSED CONCERN AMONG THE GROUND STAFF.



TOM TOUCHED DOWN GENTLY ON THE GRASS BESIDE THE RUNWAY, BUT AS THE PLANE LOST SPEED, IT LURCHED OUT OF CONTROL AND STRUCK A FUEL BOWSER WHICH WAS PARKED THERE.



THEY HAD ONLY JUST SCRAMBLED CLEAR WHEN THE PLANE AND THE BOWSER EXPLODED WITH A DEAFENING ROAR.



FLIGHT LIEUTENANT TONY RAILE, TOM'S FLIGHT COMMANDER, ANGRILY WAITED UNTIL THE WOUNDED GUNNER HAD BEEN TAKEN AWAY. THEN...



BUT THE FLIGHT COMMANDER WAS TOO ANNOYED TO LISTEN, AND WOULD HAVE CAUSED TROUBLE IF A WING COMMANDER HAD NOT ARRIVED.



THE GROUP CAPTAIN CONGRATULATED TOM WARMLY, EXPLAINING THAT HIS ACTION HAD BOOSTED THE MORALE OF THE TROOPS ON THE BEACH.

SEVERAL THOUSAND SOLDIERS WATCHED YOU FIGHT, MY BOY. IT GAVE THEM NEW HOPE!

ANYONE WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME, SIR. I WAS JUST LUCKY THAT I SAW THE JUNKERS STARTING TO DIVE...

TOM'S ACTION GAINED HIM A D. F. M., AT THAT TIME A RARE HONOUR FOR N. C. O. PILOTS!

CONGRATULATIONS, SKIPPER, YOU EARNED IT - AND THANKS AGAIN FOR SAVING MY LIFE.

THIS WAS FOR BOTH OF US, ALF. NOW LET'S FORGET IT, AND GET ON WITH THE WAR.

BUT, AFTER DUNKIRK, THE LYSANDERS WERE GIVEN ONLY BORING TASKS.

SOMEONE SHOULD TELL THEM BLOKES THAT WE'RE PULLING THIS TARGET, NOT PUSHING IT.

EVENTUALLY THE SQUADRON WAS DISBANDED AND THE CREWS POSTED TO OTHER AIRFIELDS.

WEST LAYTON?
I WONDER WHAT SORT OF KITES?

I DON'T KNOW BUT RAILE IS GOING WITH US. THAT'S NOT SO GOOD.

SO THEY MOVED ON TO THEIR NEW BASE.

LYSANDERS AGAIN? WHAT SORT OF WORK IS THE SQUADRON DOING, SIR.

SECRET OPERATIONS, SERGEANT, WHERE RECKLESS FLYING OF YOUR SORT WON'T BE REQUIRED. NO DOUBT YOU'LL BE TOLD THE DETAILS LATER...

TONY RAILE HAD NEVER FORGIVEN TOM FOR HIS DISOBEDIENCE - NOR HIS D. F. M.

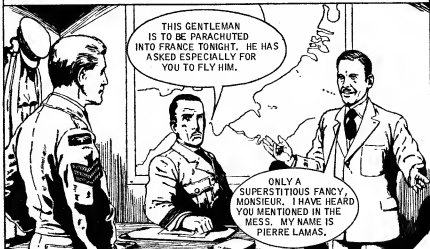
EVENTUALLY TOM DISCOVERED FROM THE WING COMMANDER, NEVILLE BUXLEY, THAT THE SQUADRON HAD BEEN FORMED TO FERRY SECRET AGENTS TO FRANCE TO HELP IN THE FORMATION OF THE RESISTANCE.



IN THE WEEKS FOLLOWING, TOM WAS GIVEN ALL THE DULL JOBS, AND RAILE NEVER MISSED A CHANCE TO CRITICISE.



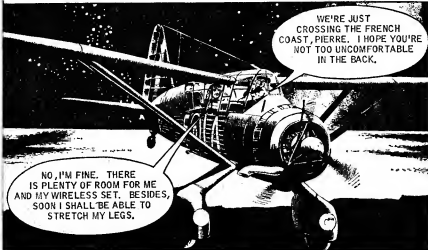
A PLEASANT SURPRISE AWAITED TOM. AT LONG LAST HE WAS TO FLY ON A SPECIAL MISSION.



THE DETAILS OF THE DROP HAD BEEN ARRANGED WITH THE RESISTANCE GROUP PIERRE WAS TO LEAD, AND TOM'S JOB WAS TO DROP HIM AT THE PREARRANGED RENDEZVOUS.



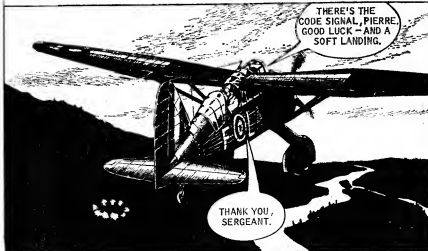
JUST AS DARKNESS FELL, THE BLACK-PAINTED LYSANDER ROARED INTO THE SKY AND HEADED FOR FRANCE - AND THE START OF A GREAT ADVENTURE.



WE'RE JUST CROSSING THE FRENCH COAST, PIERRE. I HOPE YOU'RE NOT TOO UNCOMFORTABLE IN THE BACK.

NO, I'M FINE. THERE IS PLENTY OF ROOM FOR ME AND MY WIRELESS SET. BESIDES, SOON I SHALL BE ABLE TO STRETCH MY LEGS.

EXACTLY ON TIME TOM SAW THE LIGHTS MARKING THE DROPPING ZONE AND SHOUTED A WARNING TO LAMAS.



THERE'S THE CODE SIGNAL, PIERRE. GOOD LUCK - AND A SOFT LANDING.

THANK YOU, SERGEANT.

THE PARACHUTE DRIFTED DOWN GENTLY AS TOM TURNED FOR HOME, HIS WORK FINISHED.



BUT TOM WAS WRONG. AFTER LANDING, HE WAS RUSHED TO THE OPERATIONS ROOM TO FACE BUXLEY.



THE WING COMMANDER PRODUCED AN URGENT WIRELESS MESSAGE FROM THE FRENCH RESISTANCE.

AS YOU SEE, THAT MESSAGE STATES THAT LAMAS NEVER ARRIVED. NOBODY EVEN HEARD AN AIRCRAFT. PERHAPS YOU WERE SO - ER - NERVOUS THAT YOU DROPPED HIM IN THE WRONG PLACE.

BUT I SAW THE LIGHTS AND CODE SIGNAL. ARE YOU SURE THIS MESSAGE IS GENUINE?

IT'S GENUINE ALL RIGHT. IT WAS SENT BY THE RESISTANCE GROUP, ON THEIR OLD MORSE TRANSMITTER. YOU'D BETTER GO TO YOUR QUARTERS, SERGEANT. I'LL SEE YOU IN THE MORNING.

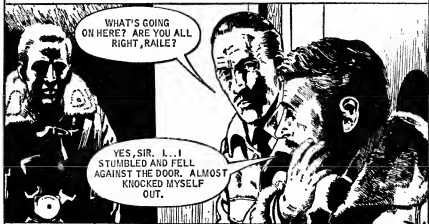
TOM LEFT THE OFFICE IN A DAZE, AND ALMOST BUMPED INTO RAILE WHO ALREADY KNEW THE STORY.

AH, SO YOU TOOK COLD FEET BEFORE YOU REACHED THE DROPPING ZONE.

TOM'S TEMPER FLARED AT THE SNEERING ACCUSATION, AND HE REACTED SWIFTLY.



TOM WAS IN A SERIOUS SITUATION WHEN BUXLEY APPEARED, BUT RAILE REALISED HE HAD ACTED RASHLY IN CALLING TOM A COWARD WITHOUT PROOF.

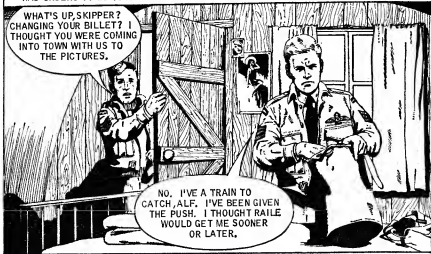


TOM BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF, BUT HIS BRUSH WITH RAILE WASN'T OVER - NOT BY A LONG CHALK.

THE WING COMMANDER STARED SUSPICIOUSLY FOR A MOMENT, BUT HE HAD MORE IMPORTANT PROBLEMS ON HIS MIND, AND HE AND RAILE RETURNED TO THE OPERATIONS ROOM.



NO OFFICIAL ACTION WAS TAKEN AGAINST TOM. BUT WITHIN TWENTY FOUR HOURS, HE HAD ORDERS TO GO TO ANOTHER UNIT.



THERE WERE NO OPERATIONAL JOBS AVAILABLE FOR A PILOT BRANDED AS UNRELIABLE AND TOM FOUND HIMSELF FLYING SPARES AROUND IN A BEAT-UP ANSON. BUT ONE DAY



TOM! WE HAVEN'T MET SINCE BEFORE DUNKIRK. I SEE BY YOUR O. F. M. THAT YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A FIGHTING JOB.

HUH, THAT'S A LAUGH, SIR. I'M WITH A COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON, FLYING THESE OLO CRATES.

SQUADRON LEADER MARK BELL, AN OLD FRIEND OF TOM, COMMANDED A TEST FLIGHT, WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE NEWLY-DEVELOPED RADAR STATIONS.



I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU NEED ANY MORE PILOTS, SIR? NOTHING COULD BE WORSE THAN DRIVING THESE FLYING TAXIS!

WELL, WE HAVE ROOM FOR ONE MORE. WE'VE BEEN GIVEN A NEW AIRCRAFT - A CIERVA AUTOGIRO. IT BELONGED TO A CIVILIAN FIRM AND THE TOP BRASS FELT IT COULD BE USEFUL TO US.

AS TOM LOOKED AT THE ODD MACHINE, NICKNAMED THE TIN GRASSHOPPER BY THE CREWS, HE HAD A SUDDEN IDEA.



I RECKON THIS KITE WOULD BE IDEAL FOR THE LAST JOB I WAS DOING — LANDING AGENTS IN FRANCE.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT, TOM. WE USE IT TO CALIBRATE THE RADAR STATIONS, AS A MOBILE MARKER. ANYWAY, IF YOU'D LIKE TO JOIN US, I'LL DO WHAT I CAN.

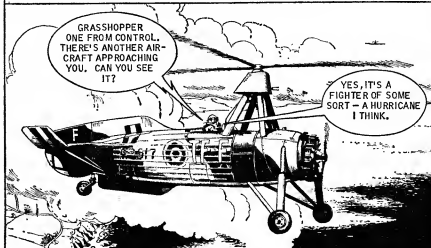
SQUADRON LEADER BELL WAS AS GOOD AS HIS WORD, AND A FEW DAYS LATER TOM WAS COMPLETING HIS CONVERSION TRAINING ON THE AUTOGIRO.



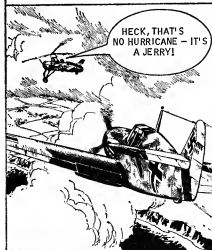
NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT THE HANG OF IT, TOM, DO YOU THINK YOU COULD FLY SOME RADAR CALIBRATION TESTS THIS MORNING?

IT SEEMS EASY ENOUGH, SIR. I JUST FLY ON THESE SET COURSES, WHILE THE RADAR BOYS PLOT MY POSITION ON THEIR SCREENS. I CAN DO IT.

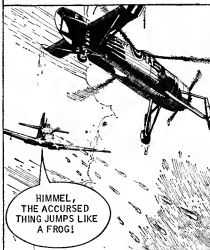
THE WORK WAS ROUTINE, BUT THE HANDY LITTLE AUTOGIRO WAS MORE FUN TO FLY THAN AN ANSON. TOM WAS ENJOYING HIMSELF, THEN, ONE MORNING...



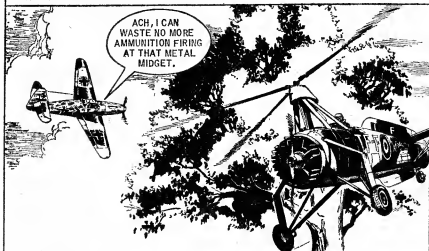
AS THE OTHER AIRCRAFT APPROACHED, TOM REALISED HIS MISTAKE.



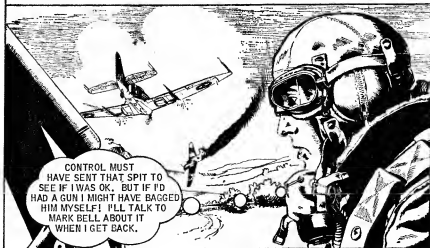
FORTUNATELY THE TIN GRASSHOPPER WAS AS AGILE AS ITS NAMESAKE.



FOR SEVERAL MINUTES THE TWO AIRCRAFT DODGED AROUND THE SKY IN A GRIM GAME OF TAG - WITH DEATH FOR THE LOSER.



THE GERMAN WAS ANGRY - AND CARELESS, AND HE PAID FOR IT WITH HIS LIFE WHEN A SPITFIRE SWOOPED FROM THE CLOUDS WITH ITS GUNS HAMMERING.

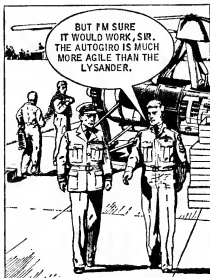


SQUADRON LEADER BELL WAS HAPPY TO ALLOW THE EXPERIMENT, AND QUICKLY PUT MECHANICS ON TO THE JOB.

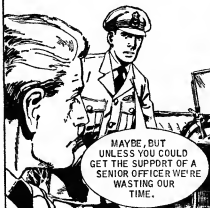


ALTHOUGH WELL PLEASED WITH HIS NEW SQUADRON, TDM HAD STILL NOT GIVEN UP THE IDEA OF PUTTING THE SHORT LANDING CAPABILITIES OF THE AUTOGIRO TO BETTER USE.





SQUADRON LEADER BELL PAUSED AS HE CLIMBED INTO HIS CAR...



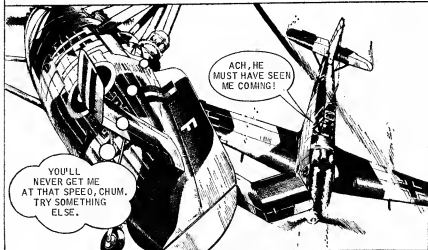
ALTHOUGH DISAPPOINTED BY THE LACK OF RESPONSE, TOM CONTINUED TO CARRY OUT TESTS FOR THE RADAR EXPERTS.



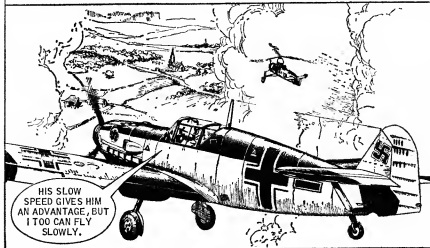
TOM SMILED GRIMLY AS THE WARNING CAME OVER HIS RADIO, AND HE PREPARED HIMSELF FOR A LITTLE ACTION.



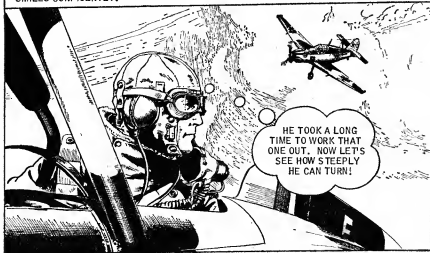
THE GERMAN PILOT ATTACKED CONFIDENTLY, EXPECTING NO RESISTANCE FROM THE SUPPOSEDLY-DEFENCELESS AUTOGIRO.



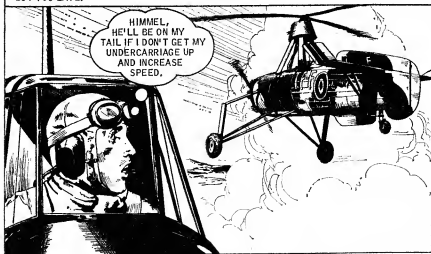
BUT THE GERMAN WAS SMART, AND SOON CHANGED HIS TACTICS TO SUIT HIS STRANGE OPPONENT. HE LOWERED HIS WHEELS AND FLAPS TO REDUCE HIS SPEED TO THE MINIMUM.



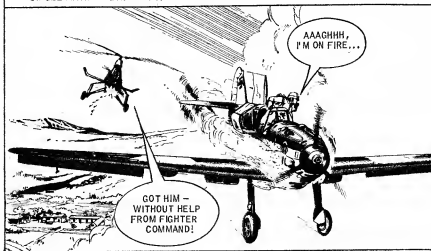
AT ALMOST STALLING SPEED, THE ENEMY AIRCRAFT CAME CURVING IN TOWARDS TOM WHO SMILED CONFIDENTLY.



AS THE AUTOGIRO WHIPPED ROUND SHARPLY, THE GERMAN PILOT REALISED HIS MISTAKE – BUT TOO LATE.



ANOTHER QUICK TURN, AND TOM HAD THE OPPORTUNITY HE HAD BEEN SEEKING. HIS SINGLE MACHINE GUN SPAT ITS DEADLY TRACER AND CLAIMED ITS FIRST VICTIM.



THE BURNING FIGHTER TRAILED A CLOUD OF SMOKE ACROSS THE SKY AND PLUNGED EARTHWARDS.



WHEN TOM RETURNED TO BASE, HE FOUND THAT THE RADAR STATION HAD ALREADY REPORTED THE FIGHT AND HE WAS GIVEN A ROUSING RECEPTION.



THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MENTION HIS SCHEME WAS TOO GOOD TO MISS AND HE EAGERLY EXPLAINED HIS IDEAS TO THE AIR COMMODORE.

...AND BESIDES, SIR, THE GRASSHOPPER IS LESS VULNERABLE TO FIGHTER ATTACK, AS YOU'VE SEEN.

IT'S CERTAINLY AN IDEA, SERGEANT, AND I SHALL PUT IT FORWARD THROUGH THE PROPER CHANNELS. YOU'LL PROBABLY BE HEARING MORE ABOUT THIS.

THE AIR COMMODORE'S RECOMMENDATION WAS ALL THAT WAS NEEDED TO GET THE SCHEME MOVING AND EARLY THE FOLLOWING WEEK TOM WAS CALLED TO SQUADRON LEADER BELL'S OFFICE.

YOU'VE DONE IT, TOM! POSTED TO YOUR OLD SQUADRON AT WEST LAYTON WITH THE TIN GRASSHOPPER. I HOPE YOUR PAL RAILE ISN'T STILL THERE!

NO, SIR, I HEARD HE'S MOVED.

TOM WAS FEELING PLEASED AS HE FLEW THE AUTOGIRO TO WEST LAYTON THE NEXT DAY, BUT AS HE STOPPED THE ENGINE OUTSIDE THE CONTROL TOWER...



FLIGHT
LIEUTENANT RAILE!
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE
STILL HERE.

SQUADRON LEADER
RAILE NOW, SERGEANT.
AND I AM NOW IN CHARGE OF
THE LYSANDER UNIT. YOU'D
BETTER COME TO
MY OFFICE.

IT WAS SOON APPARENT THAT RAILE HAD
NO INTEREST IN THE GRASSHOPPER.

...THE AIR
COMMODORE IS ANXIOUS
FOR IT TO BE USED
SOON.

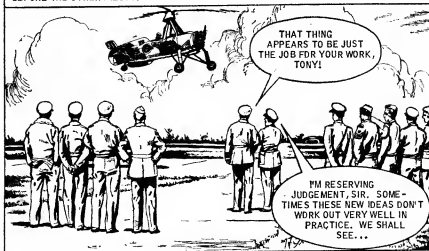
YES, BUT THIS
EXPERIMENT MUST
NOT INTERFERE WITH
OUR NORMAL WORK.

RAILE COULD NOT REFUSE TO CO-OPERATE
BUT HE COULD CAUSE TROUBLE.

YOU'RE
NOT GOING TO
LET A PERSONAL
QUARREL IN-
TERFERE...

WHAT ARE
YOU TALKING ABOUT?
PLEASE REMEMBER MY
RANK.

THAT WAS THE END OF THE INTERVIEW BUT NEXT DAY TOM AND THE AUTOGIRO PERFORMED BEFORE THE OTHER PILOTS.



TOM WAS BRIEFED FOR SEVERAL OPERATIONS, BUT ALWAYS AT THE LAST MOMENT THERE WERE SNAGS.



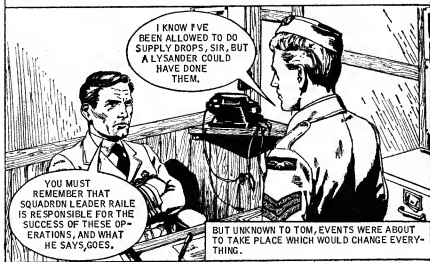
IF IT WASN'T THE WEATHER, RAILE ALWAYS HAD SOME OTHER EXCUSE.



EVERYTHING'S
READY FOR TONIGHT'S
TRIP, SIR. I'VE TOLD SER-
GEANT DUNTON TO COME
FOR BRIEFING AT
SIX.

I'VE CHANGED MY MIND
ABOUT THAT, JEREMY. I THINK
WE MUST EQUIP THE AUTOGIRO WITH
A DINGHY BEFORE IT BEGINS OP-
ERATIONS. WE'LL SEND A
LYSANDER TONIGHT.

EVEN A FORMAL PROTEST TO THE GROUP CAPTAIN FAILED TO PRODUCE ANY RESULT.



I KNOW I'VE
BEEN ALLOWED TO DO
SUPPLY DROPS, SIR, BUT
A LYSANDER COULD
HAVE DONE
THEM.

YOU MUST
REMEMBER THAT
SQUADRON LEADER RAILE
IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
SUCCESS OF THESE OP-
ERATIONS, AND WHAT
HE SAYS, GOES.

BUT UNKNOWN TO TOM, EVENTS WERE ABOUT
TO TAKE PLACE WHICH WOULD CHANGE EVERY-
THING.

NEXT DAY A SIGNAL WAS RECEIVED FROM THE RESISTANCE GROUP THAT WAS TO HAVE BEEN CONTROLLED BY PIERRE LAMAS. THE GROUP CAPTAIN CALLED IN RAILE AND THE ARMY CAPTAIN WHO FIXED UP THE AGENTS WITH SUPPLIES ETC.

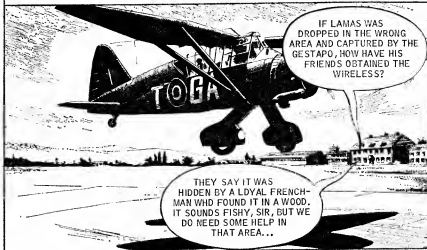


IT'S FROM THE ORIGINAL RECEPTION COMMITTEE, SIR. THEY'VE BEEN LYING LOW, AND NOW THEY WANT TO LEND A HAND AGAIN.

THEY'VE TAKEN THEIR TIME. BUT I SUPPOSE WE CAN'T BLAME THEM UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

UNCONFIRMED REPORTS HAD SUGGESTED THAT PIERRE LAMAS, TOGETHER WITH MOST OF THE MEMBERS OF HIS GROUP, HAD BEEN KILLED BY THE GESTAPO.

BUT THE WIRELESS USED WAS THE POWERFUL TRANSMITTER DROPPED WITH PIERRE, A FACT THAT SEEMED SLIGHTLY SUSPICIOUS.



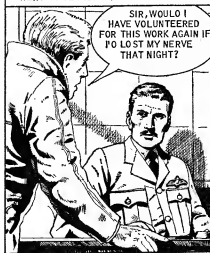
IF LAMAS WAS DROPPED IN THE WRONG AREA AND CAPTURED BY THE GESTAPO, HOW HAVE HIS FRIENDS OBTAINED THE WIRELESS?

THEY SAY IT WAS HIDDEN BY A LOYAL FRENCHMAN WHO FOUND IT IN A WOOD. IT SOUNDS FISHY, SIR, BUT WE DO NEED SOME HELP IN THAT AREA...

WHEN TOM HEARD ABOUT THE SIGNAL, HE SOUGHT OUT THE YOUNG ARMY CAPTAIN:



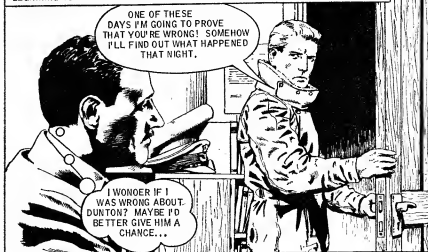
DETERMINED TO CLEAR HIS NAME TOM WENT TO SEE RAILE.



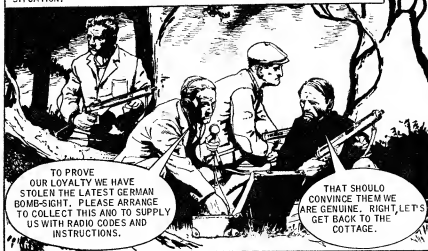
RAILE SAT QUIETLY FOR A MOMENT BEFORE ANSWERING.



RAILE HAD HONESTLY BELIEVED EARLIER THAT TOM WAS AT FAULT - BUT HE WAS BEGINNING TO HAVE DOUBTS.



BUT TWO NIGHTS LATER ANOTHER MESSAGE FROM FRANCE ALTERED THE WHOLE SITUATION.



THE MESSAGE WAS ENOUGH TO CONVINCE SQUADRON LEADER RAILE AND THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS.

THAT SETTLES IT - THEY'RE GENUINE, AND DUNTON WAS LYING!

YOU'D BETTER ARRANGE A PICK-UP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, TONY. IF IT'S GENUINE, WE'LL GIVE THEM CODES AND WEAPONS, AND PUT THEM IN TOUCH WITH OTHER RESISTANCE GROUPS.

WHEN HE HEARD THE LATEST NEWS, TOM MADE A FINAL ATTEMPT TO INTERVENE AS RAILE HIMSELF PREPARED TO FLY TO THE RENDEZVOUS.

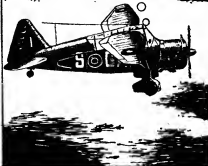
LET ME TAKE THE AUTOGIRO, SIR, AND FOLLOW YOU. I COULD LAND NEAR THE STRIP AND MAKE SURE IT'S NOT A JERRY PLOT.

THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY, SERGEANT. I'M NOT EXPECTING ANY TROUBLE OF THE SORT DREAMED UP BY YOUR VIVID IMAGINATION.

RAILE WAS TO FLY ALONE, HOPING THAT HE COULD PERSUADE ONE OF THE RESISTANCE MEN TO RETURN WITH HIM.

AND RAILE HAD HIS REASONS FOR BRINGING THE FRENCHMAN BACK.

MAYBE WE'LL GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THE DUNTON BUSINESS - EITHER CLEAR OR CONDEMN HIM.



THE HOURS TICKED AWAY, AND TOM WAITED ANXIOUSLY FOR NEWS...



SIGNAL FROM THE RESISTANCE COMING THROUGH, SIR. BUT THEY'RE USING THE OLD CODE!

THE MESSAGE WAS BRIEF - BUT ALARMING. SQUADRON LEADER RAILE HAD CRASHED WHILE TAKING OFF IN FRANCE.



IT'S RAILE SPEAKING, SIR. HE'S UNHURT, BUT HIS AIRCRAFT IS WRECKED. THE SIGHT IS ALL RIGHT, AND HE CONFIRMS THAT IT'S GENUINE.

THEN WE MUST GET HIM OUT. ARRANGE ANOTHER PICK-UP SITE. WE'LL SEND AN AIRCRAFT TOMORROW NIGHT.

TOM SAW HIS OPPORTUNITY, AND STEPPED FORWARD.

THIS IS A JOB FOR THE AUTOGIRO, SIR. I KNOW THAT PART OF FRANCE PRETTY WELL. CAN I GO?

I'M AFRAID NOT, SERGEANT. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES I DON'T THINK YOU'D BETTER HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS OPERATION.

BUT TOM HAD A FINAL CARD TO PLAY. THERE WAS ONE FACT THE GROUP CAPTAIN HAD NOT CONSIDERED.

THAT LANDING STRIP WAS THE BEST THEY COULD FIND, SIR, YET IT WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH, ONLY THE AUTOGIRO CAN GET IN NOW WITHOUT RISK!

WELL... PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT. AFTER ALL, RAILE WAS AN EXPERIENCED PILOT. ALL RIGHT, YOU'D BETTER TRY IT.

BY THE FOLLOWING NIGHT, EVERYTHING WAS READY. THE TIN GRASSHOPPER HAD BEEN TESTED, AND THE WEATHER WAS FAVOURABLE.

THESE ARE THE
RESISTANCE WIRELESS
CODES AND CALL-SIGNS. THEY
MUST NOT FALL INTO GERMAN
HANDS, YOU UNDER-
STAND?

DON'T WORRY,
SIR, I'LL LOOK AFTER
THEM. I'LL ONLY HAND THEM
OVER IN EXCHANGE FOR THE
BOMB-SIGHT.

BUT TOM WAS LESS CONFIDENT THAN
HE HAD APPEARED.

THERE'S
SOMETHING STRANGE
HERE. WHY DID RAILE CRASH?
AND HOW DID THE FRENCH-
MEN GET HOLD OF THAT
NEW BOMB-SIGHT SO
CONVENIENTLY...?

JUST BEFORE HE REACHED THE LANDING
STRIP, HE MADE UP HIS MIND...

I'LL LAND NEAR
THE PROPER PLACE,
THEN APPROACH ON FOOT.
IF THERE ARE JERRIES WAITING,
I CAN GET AWAY AGAIN
EASILY.

TDM PICKED A SMALL CLEARING IN THE WOODS, WITHIN EASY WALKING DISTANCE OF THE LANDING SITE.



BUT LUCK WASN'T WITH TDM. AS THE AUTOGIRD SETTLED FOR LANDING, ONE WHEEL STRUCK A HIDDEN STUMP, AND THE STRUT COLLAPSED.



THE DAMAGE WAS AS BAD AS TOM HAD FEARED. ONE LEG OF THE UNDERCARRIAGE HAD SHEARED AND THE WHEEL WAS PUNCTURED.



TWICE AS TOM NEARED THE LANDING SITE HE HEARD AIRCRAFT AND SAW THEM PASS LOW OVERHEAD.



AS HE APPROACHED THE LANDING STRIP, HE PAUSED AS HE HEARD VOICES.

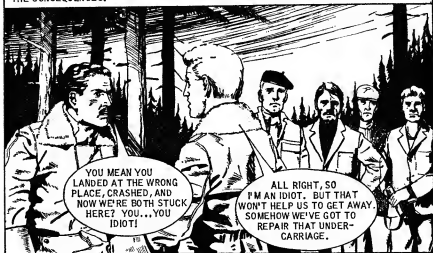
IT'S RAILE —
AND HE'S CERTAINLY
NOT A PRISONER. BOY,
WHAT A MESS...



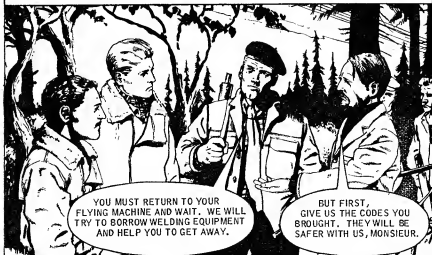
TOM WALKED FORWARD. THERE WAS NOTHING FOR IT BUT TO TELL THE TRUTH, WHATEVER THE CONSEQUENCES.

YOU MEAN YOU
LANDED AT THE WRONG
PLACE, CRASHED, AND
NOW WE'RE BOTH STUCK
HERE? YOU...YOU
IDIOT!

ALL RIGHT, SO
I'M AN IDIOT. BUT THAT
WON'T HELP US TO GET AWAY.
SOMEHOW WE'VE GOT TO
REPAIR THAT UNDER-
CARRIAGE.



THE PROBLEM WAS EXPLAINED TO THE FRENCHMEN, WHO QUICKLY OFFERED A SOLUTION.



TOM KNEW HE WAS RISKING MORE TROUBLE, BUT SOME INSTINCT WARNED HIM TO LIE.



TOM AND RAILE MADE THEIR WAY BACK TO THE CLEARING, WHERE THEY SPENT AN UNCOMFORTABLE NIGHT, HUDDLED BENEATH THE FUSELAGE OF THE AUTOGIRO.

I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU SUSPECT THESE FELLOWS. IF I HADN'T CRASHED, THE SIGHT WOULD HAVE BEEN IN ENGLAND BY NOW.

UNLESS THEY FIXED THE CRASH AS WELL!

TOM WARMED TO HIS SUBJECT, AND HE POURED OUT ALL HIS SUSPICIONS TO RAILE.

LOOK, IF THE BOMB-SIGHT WAS SUPPLIED BY THE GERMANS TO MAKE US TRUST THESE PEOPLE, THEY WOULDN'T WANT IT TO LEAVE FRANCE, RIGHT?

I SUPPOSE SOMEONE COULD HAVE PLACED AN OBSTACLE ON THE STRIP BEFORE I TOOK OFF, BUT I FIND IT VERY HARD TO BELIEVE.

TOM SHOOK HIS HEAD IMPATIENTLY.

WHAT WERE THOSE NIGHT-FIGHTERS LOOKING FOR? US, OF COURSE. THE FACT THAT YOU CONFIRMED THE BOMB-SIGHT WAS GENUINE WOULD SATISFY OUR INTELLIGENCE.

...AND IF WE WERE SHOT DOWN, THE SIGHT WOULD STILL BE A SECRET. YOU COULD BE RIGHT.

THE FRENCHMAN ARRIVED EARLY NEXT MORNING WITH SOME BORROWED WELDING GEAR.

HERE IS THE EQUIPMENT, BUT DO NOT MAKE TOO MUCH NOISE. ALTHOUGH GERMAN PATROLS SELDOM VISIT THESE WOODS, WE MUST STILL BE CAREFUL.

AND HERE IS SOME FOOD. WE WILL RETURN LATER TO SEE HOW THE WORK PROGRESSES. BONNE CHANCE, MESSIEURS!

THEY WERE ANXIOUS TO WASTE NO TIME, AND BEGAN TO WORK IMMEDIATELY AFTER GULPING DOWN A HURRIED BREAKFAST.



THE REPAIRS WERE ROUGH AND MAKE-SHIFT, BUT THEY WERE THE BEST THEY COULD MANAGE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.



LATE IN THE AFTERNOON, TWO OF THE FRENCHMEN RETURNED TO SEE HOW THE WORK WAS PROGRESSING, AND TO BRING SOME FOOD.



TOM REMEMBERED HIS LIE ABOUT THE CODES WHICH WOULD BE EXPOSED BY A WIRELESS MESSAGE, AND HE DECIDED TO KEEP AN EYE ON THE FRENCHMEN.



HE FOLLOWED HIS QUARRY THROUGH THE WOODS WITHOUT DIFFICULTY, UNTIL THEY REACHED A SMALL COTTAGE.



TOM MANAGED TO GET WELL HIDDEN BEHIND A BUSH, WHICH WAS JUST OUTSIDE AN OPEN WINDOW, THEN HE SETTLED DOWN TO LISTEN.



TOM REALISED GRIMLY THAT THE FRENCHMEN WERE TRAITORS DEALING WITH THE NAZIS. HE AND RAILE WOULD BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE - BUT NOT TO ESCAPE.



BACK AT THE CLEARING HE TOLD HIS STORY TO AN ASTONISHED RAILE WHO COULD SCARCELY BELIEVE IT.



THEY HAD ONLY THEIR REVOLVERS BUT TOM WAS HopING TO HAVE SURPRISE ON HIS SIDE.

WE'VE GOT TO TAKE THE BOMB-SIGHT, BECAUSE WHEN THEY CONTACT OUR BASE THEY'LL BE TOLD I'VE GOT THE CODES WITH ME AND KNOW WE SUSPECT THEM.

WHAT? SERGEANT, IF I EVER GET OUT OF THIS, YOU'LL SPEND THE REST OF THE WAR IN THE GLASS-HOUSE.

ALTHOUGH THERE WAS NO SIGN OF THE GERMAN CAR, THEY APPROACHED THE COTTAGE WARILY.

I'D BETTER SEE HOW THE ENGLISH ARE GETTING ON. I'LL TAKE THE RADIO, SO THEY CAN SEND A REASSURING MESSAGE TO THEIR SUPERIORS.

A GOOD IDEA. THE FOOLS WILL NEVER KNOW HOW USEFUL THEY HAVE BEEN TO US.

THE FRENCHMAN SET OFF ALONG THE PATH, UNAWARE THAT HE HAD COMPANY —



THEY TRUSS UP THE TRAITOR SECURELY.



CAUTIOUSLY THEY APPROACHED THE COTTAGE.



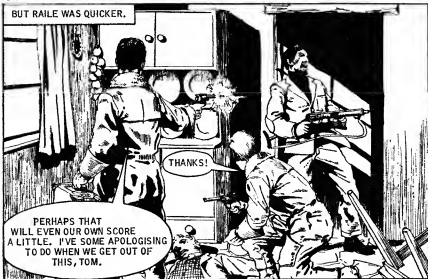
THEIR APPEARANCE IN THE DOORWAY CAUSED MOMENTARY CONFUSION AND TOM GAVE THEM NO CHANCE.



THE SECOND FRENCHMAN FELL TO TOM'S FIRE, BUT A THIRD ONE WAS LURKING BEHIND A DOOR.



BUT RAILE WAS QUICKER.



NOW THEY HAD NO OPPOSITION AND THEY SOON FOUND THE BOMB-SIGHT AND ITS CASE.



THEN, JUST AS THEY WERE READY TO GO, THEY HEARD A BRISK VOICE FROM OUTSIDE.



AS THE STRANGER ENTERED THE DOOR HE SENSED SOMETHING WAS WRONG, AND DREW A PISTOL. BUT TOM STRUCK FAST -

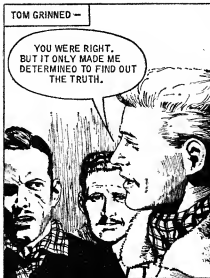
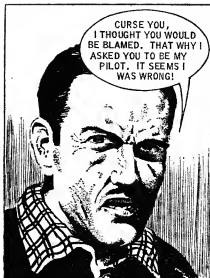


THE NEW ARRIVAL FELL TO HIS KNEES, HATRED BURNING IN HIS EYES – BUT THEN CAME RECOGNITION.



WHEN HE RECOGNISED PIERRE, ALL THE PIECES FELL INTO PLACE FOR TOM.





FOR A MOMENT IT SEEMED THAT THEY WOULD REACH THE WOODS SAFELY. BUT THEN A
GERMAN MOTOR-CYCLE COMBINATION APPEARED.



A QUICK BURST ACCOUNTED FOR ONE SOLDIER, BUT THE OTHER OPENED HIS THROTTLE AND RACED AWAY.



THEY HURRIED BACK TO THE AUTOGIRD AND STOWED THE PRECIOUS BOMB-SIGHT ON BOARD.



SQUADRON LEADER RAILE WORKED FRANTICALLY TO PREPARE THE AIRCRAFT FOR TAKE-OFF, BUT STILL TOM SAT AT THE RADIO.



TOM WAS SMASHING THE RADIO WHEN THE FIRST GERMANS BURST THROUGH THE BUSHES INTO THE CLEARING.



TONY RAILE KEPT THE GERMANS BUSY WHILE TOM SPRINTED FOR THE AUTOGIRO, AND CLAMBERED ABOARD.

THANK GOOODNESS, CAUGHT FIRST TIME! I KNEW SHE WOULDN'T LET US DOWN.

YOU RECKLESS IDIOT, THAT DELAY HAS RUINED OUR CHANCE OF ESCAPE. AND THIS IS THE LAST OF MY AMMUNITION!

TOM SMILED GRIMLY, AND AS THE GERMANS CHARGED FORWARD HE STABBED HIS FINGER AT THE FIRING BUTTON OF HIS GUN.

AAGH!

I KNEW MY LITTLE GUN WOULD COME IN HANDY SOME TIME!

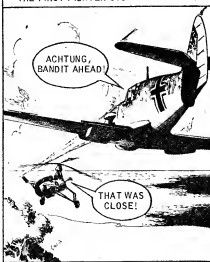
PURSUED BY A FEW WILD SHOTS, THE TIN GRASSHOPPER JUMPED INTO THE AIR AND SOARED ABOVE THE TREES.



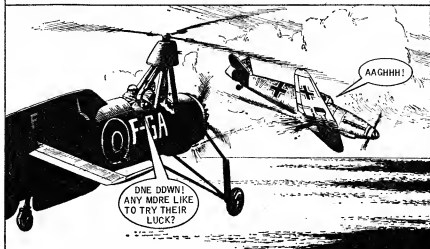
KEEPING LOW, THEY SPED FOR THE COAST.



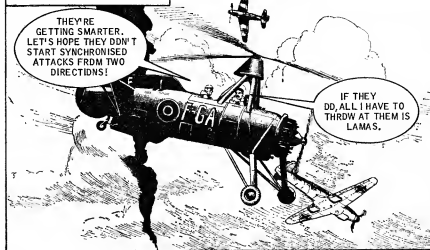
THE FIRST FIGHTER SOON FOUND THEM.



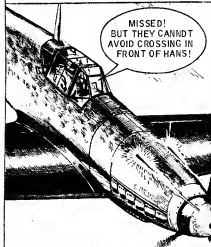
THE FIGHT TOOK THEM OVER THE ENGLISH CHANNEL. THE AUTOGIRD KEPT DODGING AND WEAVING AS THE FIGHTER SLID PAST TDM'S SIGHTS...



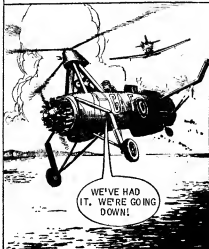
TWO MORE FIGHTERS SWDOPED LIKE HAWKS, THEIR GUNS HAMMERING, AND TDM NEEDED ALL HIS SKILL TO AVOID THEM.



BUT THE GERMAN PILOTS WERE VETERANS, AND SOON COTTONED ON.



TOM JERKED HIS CONTROLS BUT IT WAS TOO LATE.



SPINNING WILDLY, THE SHATTERED FUSELAGE DROPPED TOWARDS THE SEA.



WITH THE TIN GRASSHOPPER PRACTICALLY UNDER WATER, RAILE STRUGGLED WITH TOM'S HARNESS AS LAMAS STRUGGLED TO KEEP AFLOAT.



THE DINGHY WAS TOO SMALL TO HOLD ALL THREE, BUT IT WOULD KEEP THEM AFLOAT.

THEY LOOKED UP GRIMLY AS ONE OF THE ENEMY FIGHTERS CAME SWOOPING DOWN TO ATTACK.

STOP
SHOOTING YOU
FOOLS! I'M ON YOUR
SIDE - I HELPED
YOU.

YOU'RE WASTING
YOUR BREATH, THOSE
BULLETS ARE FOR ALL OF
US. AND THE NEXT
BURST WON'T
MISS.

BUT JUST AS THE NEXT FIGHTER BEGAN
ITS ATTACK, HELP ARRIVED.

BANDITS
SIGHTED, BLUE
SQUADRON! ATTACK,
ATTACK!

AS SOME SPITFIRES DROVE AWAY THE ATTACKING Me109 THE OTHERS BANKED IN PROTECTIVE CIRCLES ABOVE THE DINGHY.



FOR A MOMENT THE SQUADRON LEADER FROWNED ANGRILY – THEN HIS FACE BROKE INTO A RELUCTANT GRIN.



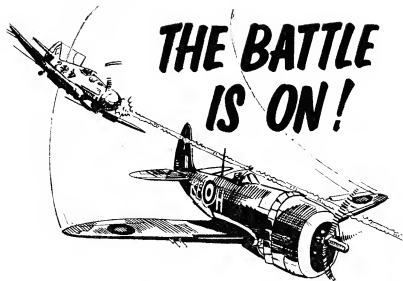
EVEN BEFORE THE RESCUE LAUNCH ARRIVED THE SQUADRON LEADER WAS MAKING PLANS BUT PERMISSION HAD FIRST TO BE RECEIVED. UNFORTUNATELY THE PERMISSION TOOK TIME, AND ARRIVED TOO LATE —



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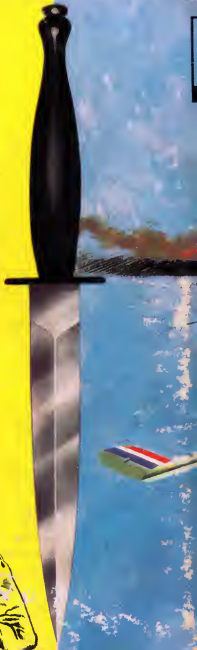
Like a terrier in defence, he can also be brilliantly creative in midfield and he often likes a pot at goal into the bargain — for those size-six boots contain a rocket shot!

He may be a small guy, but big-hearted Billy will never be dwarfed for ability.

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And another thing—it didn't have any wings either . . .



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